

Office of Public Engagement Roundup

Week of April 12 – April 19, 2013

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1. EPA Administrator Nominee Goes Before Senate in Confirmation Hearing

Today the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held a hearing on the confirmation of Gina McCarthy, President Obama's nominee to head the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) after the departure of former administrator Lisa Jackson earlier this year. **The National Cattlemen's Beef Association (NCBA) said it hopes that if McCarthy is confirmed, that she will work to develop a more positive working relationship with the agriculture industry.**

"Whether it is releasing producers' personal information to activist groups or trying to regulate all ponds and puddles across the U.S., **EPA has not worked cooperatively with the cattle industry under the current administration,**" said NCBA Deputy Environmental Counsel Ashley McDonald. **"We sincerely hope Ms. McCarthy, if confirmed by the Senate, would work to improve this relationship which will ultimately have a more positive impact on the environment than the current anti-agriculture attitude that is prolific within the agency."**

During the hearing, McCarthy, who is currently the head of EPA's air office, was questioned on issues such as the Spill Prevention Control and Counter measure (SPCC) rule and whether she would commit to not creating a national database with information on agricultural operations around the country, with most of these questions asked by Sen. Deb Fischer (R-Neb.). **Fischer also urged McCarthy and EPA to ensure that regulations are made on sound publicly available science subject to a thorough analysis.**

"We have bridges to build with the farming community," McCarthy said during the hearing, also saying that "I'm a meat eater myself."

However, McCarthy would not commit to supporting the Farmers Undertake Environmental Land Stewardship (FUELS) Act, which was recently introduced in the House and Senate and would lessen the burden of the SPCC rule on farms and ranches. **McCarthy also could not commit to not creating a national database which would make producer information publicly available and readily searchable through EPA's website.** McDonald said these two statements by McCarthy call into question whether she truly wants to build relationships with the agricultural community, including cattle producers.

<http://www.beefusa.org/newsreleases1.aspx?NewsID=2883>

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2. Celebrating 20 Years of Environmental Justice at EPA

I had the good fortune to attend a reception celebrating the 20th Anniversary of the establishment of the USEPA's Office of Environmental Justice (OEJ) last week in Washington, D.C. This event celebrated the accomplishments of the Environmental Justice movement and recognized the work of many of the pioneers in the movement over the past 20 years. Lisa Garcia, Associate Assistant Administrator for EPA's OEJ opened the evening's events that included presentations by Charles Lee, former director of the OEJ and Vernice Miller-Travis, long time environmental justice advocate. Charles Lee looked back at the significance of his seminar report *Toxic Waste and Race in the United States* published in 1987. Key recommendations in this report included urging the EPA to establish an Office of Hazardous Wastes and Racial and Ethnic Affairs which became the Office of Environmental Justice in 1992; urging the President to issue an Executive Order on Environmental Justice mandating federal agencies to consider the impact of current policies and regulations on racial and ethnic communities which Bill Clinton did in 1994; and further urging EPA to establish a National Advisory Council on Racial and Ethnic Concerns which became the National Environmental Justice Advisory Council in 1993. Vernice Miller-Travis spoke of other seminal reports and moments in the Environmental Justice Movement including the First National People of Color Environmental Leadership Summit and the formation of the Principles of Environmental Justice.

Environmental Justice Pioneer Awards were given to former EPA Administrator Lisa Perez Jackson and to Dr. Clarice Gaylord, the first director of the EPA Office of Environmental Justice. Also honored was Dr. Mildred McClain for her spirit and lifelong commitment to Environmental Justice. The most moving moment of the evening came when past heroes and sheroes (their word) of the Environmental Justice movement were recognized and honored. The individual images of sixteen leaders who had passed away in recent years were shown on a large screen in a moving video tribute. Virtually every one of these individuals were people I and others at CHEJ had known and worked with before. By the time the video tribute was over, I don't think there was a dry eye in the room. It was very moving.

The newly appointed director of the Office of Environmental Justice, Matthew Tejada was also introduced that night. Matt was the former director of the Air Alliance Houston. Music and refreshments were served to close out the evening as several hundred environmental justice activists and supporters shared memories and hopes for the futures. The theme for the evening seemed to be that much has been accomplished but much more still needs to be done, like all struggles for justice.

<http://chej.org/2013/04/celebrating-20-years-of-environmental-justice-at-epa/>

3. AAPD praises selection of Gina McCarthy for EPA Administrator

In response to the Obama Administration's nomination of Gina McCarthy to succeed Lisa Jackson as Environmental Protection Agency Administrator, the American Association of People with Disabilities, released the following statement from President and CEO Mark Perriello:

AAPD supports the nomination of Gina McCarthy for Environmental Protection Agency Administrator. According to the CDC approximately 8% of Americans have asthma, including over 7 million children.

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Gina McCarthy has a proven record of bipartisan leadership implementing policies that have a direct, positive impact for the health and quality of life of Americans with disabilities. We look forward to working with Ms. McCarthy as EPA Administrator and urge her confirmation based on her record and reputation as a collaborative and pragmatic public servant dedicated to environmental and public health.

As Assistant Administrator for EPA's Office of Air and Radiation since 2009, McCarthy has made great strides to reduce harmful pollutants that trigger severe asthma attacks. The Mercury and Air Toxic Standards, which McCarthy spearheaded in 2011, sets emission limits for power plants in order to reduce mercury, arsenic and other toxic air pollution. This rule alone will help to prevent up to 11,000 premature deaths, 4,700 heart attacks and 130,000 asthma attacks every year.

<http://www.aapd.com/resources/press-room/aapd-praises-selection-of-2.html>

4. Environment America to Senate: Confirm Gina McCarthy to Lead EPA

As the U.S. Senate Environment and Public Works Committee held its confirmation hearing for Gina McCarthy, President Obama's nominee to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, Anna Aurilio, Director of Environment America's D.C. office, issued the following statement in response:

"Gina McCarthy's stellar record of winning real results for our environment and public health—under both Republican and Democratic administrations—makes her an excellent pick to be the next head of EPA. Because when it comes to protecting our health and environment, it isn't about who you work for or what party you represent. It's about whether you can get the job done, and Gina McCarthy has proven she can get the job done.

"There's still a lot of work to do. We're counting on the EPA to move ahead with carbon limits for new and existing power plants, the largest sources of global warming pollution. We also look forward to working with the EPA to secure protections for all our waterways from the pollution currently endangering drinking water for more than 117 million Americans.

"I urge our senators to support Gina McCarthy's nomination so that we can get back to work tackling our most urgent environmental and public health challenges."

<http://www.environmentamerica.org/news/ame/environment-america-senate-confirm-gina-mccarthy-lead-epa>

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5. Five Reasons to Support Gina McCarthy's Nomination to Lead the EPA

If your child has asthma or if your parent suffers from heart disease or if you are one of the millions of Americans who value clean air, then the Senate confirmation hearing for Gina McCarthy on Thursday will be of interest to you. McCarthy has been tapped to lead the Environmental Protection Agency, and given her track record of protecting America's families from toxic pollution, her confirmation will help us all breathe easier.

Throughout her decades of public service, McCarthy has proven to be a pragmatic and inclusive defender of environmental protections. She has worked both at state agencies and the EPA and has consistently demonstrated her commitment to public health and climate action.

Her leadership at the EPA could significantly improve our nation's air and water. When the EPA was created more than 40 years ago, Congress charged it with the duty of using the best science to reduce dangerous pollution. Most of EPA's standards are dictated by time-honored statutes like the Clean Air Act and the Clean Water Act. But in the past, some EPA leaders tried to gum up the works by postponing new safeguards and ignoring court orders to update standards.

That is not McCarthy's style. She will keep the agency on track and move the nation toward healthier, cleaner days. Here is a short list of why McCarthy has earned our support.

[http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/fbeinecke/five_reasons_to_support_gina_m.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+switchboard_fbeinecke+\(Switchboard%3A+Frances+Beinecke's+Blog\)](http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/fbeinecke/five_reasons_to_support_gina_m.html?utm_source=feedburner&utm_medium=feed&utm_campaign=Feed%3A+switchboard_fbeinecke+(Switchboard%3A+Frances+Beinecke's+Blog))

6. Texas Fails on Climate Change (Again)

Despite the growing body of evidence, Texas officials continue to ignore the threat that climate change poses. In fact, they're downright hostile to it. In comments submitted to the EPA last week, officials at the Texas Commission on Environmental Quality called climate change science "questionable, contentious, and presently debatable" and stated that EPA's draft plan to prepare for climate change impacts is "unnecessary." They also claimed that "[m]uch of the science behind global warming theories continues to be hotly debated in the scientific community..." This is in direct contradiction to the facts: 97 percent of climate scientists and over 200 scientific organizations worldwide agree that warming trends over the past century are very likely due to human activities.

Texas's continual failure to consider climate change risks is placing people and communities in the Lone Star State at risk. Recent research suggests that extreme drought conditions seen in the state during 2011 are distinctly more probable now than 40 to 50 years ago due to contributions from climate change. And climate change modeling conducted to support the 2013 National Climate Assessment indicates that the southern part of the Great Plains will become both hotter and drier in the coming decades. In fact, nearly 90 percent of Texas, which has endured severe drought conditions in the past few years, is currently facing moderate to exceptional drought.

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As a result of prolonged drought conditions, the state's water supply reservoirs are only 66 percent full compared to the 1990-2013 median of nearly 85 percent at this time of the year. To deal with water shortages, more than 650 water systems have implemented mandatory water use restrictions, such as limiting or even banning outdoor water use. And if things already weren't bad enough, drought conditions are forecast to persist or intensify for western and southern Texas in the coming months. The state's failure to acknowledge and consider climate change-related risks is in sharp contrast to other states across the country that are moving decisively to plan and prepare. Next week, we'll be releasing our new *Getting Climate Smart* report, a guide for states (like Texas) on how to develop and implement a climate preparedness plan. Our upcoming guide lays out a six-step process and contains more than 600 strategies states can use to prepare for increasingly warmer temperatures, more variable precipitation patterns, and higher sea levels.

As our guide points out, there's still time for states like Texas to get their act together. But with carbon pollution increasingly fueling extreme weather events and other changes in climate, time is running out.

http://switchboard.nrdc.org/blogs/bchou/texas_fails_on_climate_change.html

7. Wärtsilä 34DF is the first dual-fuel engine family to receive United States EPA certificate

Wärtsilä, the marine industry's leading solutions and services provider, has obtained certification of emission standard compliance from the United States Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) for its Wärtsilä 34DF dual-fuel engines. It will enable Wärtsilä to strongly enter the American market with marine engine technology that offers operators and owners the option of using either diesel or gas as fuel. The certification was obtained on 17 January 2013.

"The Wärtsilä 34DF is the first dual-fuel engine fulfilling the EPA requirements and this is a very important statutory recognition of Wärtsilä dual-fuel technology," says Andrea Bochicchio, Director, Product Management & Engineering, Product Centre 4-stroke, Wärtsilä PowerTech.

With the passing of this compliance milestone, Wärtsilä anticipates that market demand in the USA for its range of dual-fuel engines will further increase. The first engines will equip the 'Harvey Energy', an offshore supply vessel built for Harvey Gulf International Marine. Four sister vessels will shortly be supplied with the same Wärtsilä engines, thus further demonstrating both the viability of liquefied natural gas (LNG) as a marine fuel and its growing popularity among ship owners and operators. LNG fuelled vessels offer compelling operational cost savings and significant environmental benefits.

"Economic and environmental factors are having a tremendous impact on the shipping industry, and at Wärtsilä we firmly believe that flexible fuel options are a positive step in alleviating these challenges. Our dual-fuel engine technology enables environmental legislation to be met where necessary, while maintaining the ability to use conventional diesel fuel in unrestricted areas," says Giulio Tirelli, Director, Wärtsilä Ship Power, 4-stroke Portfolio & Applications.

EPA certification applies to United States flagged vessels. The Wärtsilä dual-fuel engine capability enables ships to be operated on either conventional liquid marine fuels or LNG. The switch between

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fuels can be made seamlessly without loss of power or speed. Such fuel flexibility enables compliance with emission regulations in controlled areas, while giving operators the option of determining the fuel according to cost and availability.

<http://www.wartsila.com/en/press-releases/wartsila-34DF-is-the-first-dual-fuel-engine-family-to-receive-United-States-EPA-certificate>

8. AFPM Comments on EPA Administrator Confirmation Hearing

Statement from American Fuel & Petrochemical Manufacturers (AFPM) President Charles T. Drevna on the April 11 confirmation hearing of Gina McCarthy as administrator of the Environmental Protection Agency:

“AFPM hopes that Ms. McCarthy will end the Agency’s increasingly politicized culture, and that her tenure at EPA will be remembered for rulemaking based on transparency and scientific accountability. We hope she chooses to end the days of ‘silo political regulations’ in which government regulators ignore the real marketplace and issue conflicting rules and mandates that impose higher energy costs on consumers and jeopardize job growth, all while offering negligible environmental improvements.

“We look to Ms. McCarthy to begin an era where the energy industry and government regulators work together to ensure that all efforts to protect our environment not only make sense, but that they don’t come at the expense of job growth and economic stability.”

<http://www.afpm.org/news-release.aspx?id=3701>

9. We Need Gina McCarthys Leadership at the EPA

Today’s hearing in the Senate Environment and Public Works Committee demonstrated why Gina McCarthy is being widely supported in her bid to become the next Environmental Protection Agency Administrator. She mentioned at the hearing that if she is confirmed, her top priorities as head of the EPA would be to protect the air we breathe and the water we drink, address climate change, and reduce the threat of toxic chemicals. League of Conservation Voters President Gene Karpinski wrote a new blog on the *Huffington Post* this morning talking about her long career in public service—working for both Republicans and Democrats to protect public health:

The Senate is moving forward this week with consideration of President Obama's nomination of Gina McCarthy to head the Environmental Protection Agency. This is an opportunity for the Senate to rise above partisanship and do what's right for families across the country -- confirm a proven problem-solver to head the EPA and protect public health.

The EPA is the cop on the beat in charge of protecting the air we breathe and the water we drink. All across the country, families count on the EPA to protect our children and families from dangerous air

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pollution, water pollution, and toxic chemicals in industrial and household products that threaten our health and safety.

<http://www.lcv.org/media/blog/we-need-gina-mccarthys.html>

10. The North American Flame Retardant Alliance Responds to Washington Post Coverage of Flame Retardants

In response to today's story ("Flame retardants in consumer products are linked to health and cognitive problems") in the Washington Post about flame retardants, **American Chemistry Council's** North American Flame Retardant Alliance released the following statement.

"We believe it is the role of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) to determine if chemicals are safe for use. State chemical bans are not necessary and often in conflict with other jurisdictions. This creates a great deal of confusion in the marketplace regarding compliance and enforcement. **EPA's recent announcement that it plans to conduct assessments on 23 commonly used chemicals, including some flame retardants, shows the agency already has a great deal of authority to evaluate and regulate chemicals.** We are committed to working with state policymakers and sharing the science-based information that shows that flame retardants can provide an important layer of fire safety that helps save lives."

"It is important to remember that flame retardant producers operate internationally, and so flame retardants are subject to review not only in the United States but also by relevant regulatory authorities such as those in Europe, Australia, Canada, Japan and other countries. **As flame retardant manufacturers strive to innovate and make better performing and sustainable flame retardants, they must gain EPA approval before making or importing new substances. EPA can request the information it needs to make its evaluation and is not limited in the time it can take for its review.** Moreover, EPA has the authority to require additional data or restrict a substance after it has been introduced to the market."

<http://www.americanchemistry.com/Media/PressReleasesTranscripts/ACC-news-releases/The-North-American-Flame-Retardant-Alliance-Responds-to-Washington-Post-Coverage-of-Flame-Retardants.html>

11. EPA Advisor Aims to Build Trust with Ag

The new senior Agricultural Counselor to the Environmental Protection Agency Administrator held a conference call Tuesday to discuss her background and her role as an advisor at EPA on ways environmental policy may impact growers and the greater agriculture community. Sarah Bittleman accepted the new position with EPA in February after serving Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack as USDA Senior Advisor on energy policy.

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“The position of ag counselor helps ensure that the EPA administrator and senior agency staff are advised on ways in which complex environmental issues impact growers and the greater agricultural community,” she said.

Bittleman admits that there is a problem of trust when it comes to farmers and ranchers and the EPA. “My job is to restore some of that trust,” she said, noting that it might be improved by working more closely with USDA, conservation districts and state departments of agriculture that have a better relationship with producers. “By partnering with these other folks who work so closely with agriculture, we can little by little grow a base of increased and better trust relationships.”

Bittleman says her goal as EPA advisor is to serve rural America.

<http://agwired.com/2013/04/16/epa-advisor-aims-to-build-trust-with-ag/>